

## DECISION RECORD

Reference: Environmental Assessment (EA) for Grazing Authorization, NM-066-99-95

Decision: It is my decision to authorize the issuance of a ten year grazing permit to Mr. Kent Gebel for the Bureau of Land Management grazing allotment #65034. The permit will authorize 639 AU's (555 AU's active at 46% public land and 84 in suspension) from March 1 to the end of February, for 1283 Animal Unit Months (AUM's). **AND,**

- Implement a pasture rotation system
- Rest two pastures during the entire growing season
- Monitor vegetation with approved methodology
- Change allotment category from "M" to "I", and
- Meet terms and conditions identified on the grazing permit.

Any additional mitigation measures identified in the environmental assessment impacts sections of the referenced EA have been formulated into stipulations, terms and conditions

### **Terms and Conditions:**

The following are terms and conditions specific to the above alternative. Changes to these terms and conditions may be initiated by either party through the consultation coordination process.

1. The following shinnery oak pastures will not be grazed during the fall/winter season from October 15 to April 1 each year: White Lake, Apache, Mescalero, Bighorn, East Presler, West, Chumley, North Antelope and South Antelope.

2. Rest two of the nine shinnery oak pastures identified above during July, August and September each year.

3. Robel's vegetative monitoring methodology which has been approved by the five state Lesser Prairie Chicken Interstate Working Group will be implemented to measure lesser prairie chicken habitat requirements. Specific parameters include:

- Shrub coverage - 25 to 30% composition of entire vegetative community.

- Forb coverage - 10 to 15% composition of entire vegetative community.

Grass coverage - 60% composition of entire vegetative community;  
10% with a visual obstruction reading (VOR) > or equal to 3.0  
decimeters, an average VOR of 1.0 decimeter.

Note: It is important to understand that these parameters in certain pastures may not be met until the habitat has time to respond to the new grazing management practices. As long as improvement is being made in those pastures, then changes should not be necessary. If prairie chicken habitat requirements are not being improved as a result of livestock grazing practices, changes will be necessary.

4. Livestock grazing management changes may be required as a result of periods of abnormal climatic patterns and the vegetative condition resulting from these climatic changes.

5. A range evaluation will take place every three years and adjustments will be made if necessary.

Comments from the New Mexico Natural History Institute and the Wildlife Management Institute were received and responses made to clarify and answer their concerns. Response letters to interested parties regarding their comments are located in the EA file.

If you wish to protest this proposed decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.2, you are allowed 15 days to do so in person or in writing to the authorized officer, after the receipt of this decision. Please be specific in your points of protest. In the absence of a protest, this proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice, in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3. A period of 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final, is provided for filing an appeal and petition for the stay of the decision, for the purposes of a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (43 CFR 4.470.).

The appeal shall be filed with the office of the Field Office Manager, 2909 West Second, Roswell, NM, 88201, and must state clearly and concisely your specific points.

Signed by T. R Kreager  
Assistant Field Manager

8/25/99  
Date

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
for  
GRAZING AUTHORIZATION**

**ALLOTMENT 65034 SECTION 3**

**EA-NM-060-99-95**

**MAY, 1999**

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Roswell Field Office  
Roswell, New Mexico**

# **Environmental Assessment for Grazing Allotment 65034**

## **I. Background**

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### **A. Introduction**

When authorizing livestock grazing on public range, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has historically relied on a land use plan and environmental impact statement to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A recent decision by the Interior Board of Land Appeals, however, affirmed that the BLM must conduct a site-specific NEPA analysis before issuing a permit or lease to authorize livestock grazing. This environmental assessment fulfills the NEPA requirement by providing the necessary site-specific analysis of the effects of issuing a new grazing lease on Allotment 65034.

The scope of this environmental assessment is limited to the effects of issuing a new grazing lease on Allotment 65034. Over time, the need could arise for subsequent management activities which relate to grazing authorization. These activities could include vegetation treatments (e.g., prescribed fires, herbicide projects), range improvement projects (e.g., fences, water developments), and others. Future management actions related to livestock grazing would be addressed in project-specific NEPA documents as they are proposed.

### **B. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action**

The purpose of issuing a new grazing lease would be to authorize livestock grazing on public range on Allotment 65034. The lease would be needed to specify the types and levels of use authorized, and the terms and conditions of the authorization pursuant to 43 CFR 4130.3, 4130.3-1, 4130.3-2 and 4180.1.

### **C. Conformance with Land Use Planning**

Upon review of the Roswell Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Bureau of Land Management 1997), the proposed action was found to conform with the Record of Decision as required by 43 CFR 1610.5-5.

### **D. Relationships to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans**

The proposed action and alternatives are consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1700 et seq.); the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 (43 U.S.C. 315 et seq.), as amended; the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.), as amended; the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1535 et seq.) as amended; the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management; and Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands.

## **II. Proposed Action and Alternatives**

### **A. Proposed Action: (Existing Situation)**

To authorize the grazing permit on the White Lakes - Crosby, allotment # 65034 for 639 AU's (555 AUs active at 47% public land and 84 AUs in suspension). Specifically, to authorize a grazing permit for 555 cows active and 84 cows suspended from March 1 to the last day of February of each year at 47% public land, while continuing current livestock management practices.:

### **B. Change livestock management alternative: (Preferred Alternative)**

Authorize the grazing permit at current numbers, 555 AUs active and 84 AUs suspended and:

- Implement a pasture rotation grazing system
- Rest two pastures during the growing season
- Monitor vegetation with approved methodology
- Change Allotment Category from "M" to "I"
- Meet Terms & Conditions identified on grazing permit.

### **Terms and Conditions:**

The following are terms and conditions specific to this alternative. Changes to these terms and conditions may be initiated by either party through the consultation and coordination process.

1. The following shinnery oak pastures will not be grazed during the fall/winter season from approximately October 15 to April 1 each year: White Lake, Apache, Mescalero, Bighorn, East Presler, West, Chumley, North Antelope and South Antelope.

2. Rest two of the nine shinnery oak pastures identified above during July, August and September each year.

3. Robel's vegetative monitoring methodology which has been approved by the five state Lesser Prairie Chicken Interstate Working Group will be implemented to measure lesser prairie chicken habitat requirements. Specific parameters include:

- Shrub coverage - 25 to 30% composition of entire vegetative community.

- Forb coverage - 10 to 15% composition of entire vegetative community.

- Grass coverage - 60% composition of entire vegetative community;

- 10% with a visual obstruction reading (VOR) > or equal to 3.0 decimeters, an average VOR of 1.0 decimeter.

Note: It is important to understand that these parameters in certain pastures may not be met until the habitat has time to respond to the new grazing management practices. As long as improvement is being made in those pastures, then changes should not be necessary. If prairie chicken habitat requirements are not being improved as a result of livestock grazing practices, changes will be necessary.

4. Livestock grazing management changes may be required as a result of periods of abnormal climatic patterns and the vegetative condition resulting from these climatic changes.

5. A range evaluation will take place every three years and adjustments will be made if necessary.

### **C. No Permit/Lease authorization alternative:**

This alternative, if selected, would be to not issue a new grazing lease for the White Lakes - Crosby. allotment #65034. No grazing would be authorized on federal land under this alternative. The No Grazing alternative was considered, but not chosen in the Rangeland Reform Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Record of Decision (ROD) (p. 28). The elimination of grazing in the Roswell Field Office Area was considered but eliminated by the Roswell RMP/ROD (pp. ROD-2).

## **III. Affected Environment**

### **General Setting**

This allotment lies within the Roswell Grazing District established subsequent to the Taylor Grazing Act. Grazing authorization on Public Lands inside the Grazing District Boundary is governed by Section 3 of the Taylor Grazing Act. Livestock numbers for the allotment are controlled under this Section 3 permit, the allottee is billed for the amount of forage available for livestock on federal lands.

Allotment #65034 is in Chaves County, approximately 35 miles Northeast of Roswell. This allotment consists of approximately 16,814 acres of federal land, 4,519 acres of State Land, and 13,342 acres of private land (see map). Currently this allotment is categorized as a "M" or Maintain allotment. This allotment consists of the shinnery oak community (72%), grassland community (19%) and the drainages, draws and canyons community (9%). The public land is primarily a shinnery oak/dune plant community. Annual precipitation for this region averages 12 -13 inches.

The following resources or values are not present or would not be affected by the authorization of livestock grazing on Allotment #65034; Prime/Unique Farmland, Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Hazardous Wastes, water quality, riparian/wetlands, floodplains, Areas of Critical

Environmental Concern, and Minority/low Income populations.

Cultural inventory surveys would continue to be required for federal actions involving surface disturbing activities except where criteria to exempt surveys are met. Eligible and potential eligible sites would continue to be protected from damage or archaeologically treated to mitigate damage.

The impact of the proposed action and alternatives to minority or low-income populations or communities has been considered and no significant impact is anticipated.

## **A. Affected Resources**

1. Soils: There are several soil units on this allotment including; Faskin (FaA), Faskin-Malstrom association (FMA), Tucumcari (TvA), Roswell-Jalmar (RPD), Chispa-Malstrom association (CMB), Ratliff-Redona association (RBA), Jalmar-Roswell-Pyote association (JRC), and the Sharvana (ShA).

The majority of these soils exhibit moderate permeability. Their available water capacity runs from moderate to high. Runoff characteristics vary from slow to medium. Water erosion hazard for the soils is slight to moderate. While soil blowing hazard is generally very high. For detailed soil information, please refer to the Soil Survey of Chaves County, New Mexico, Northern Part, published by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). A copy of these publications may be reviewed at the BLM Roswell Field Office or a local NRCS office.

### **2. Vegetation:**

There are three primary ecological (range) sites on this allotment; Deep Sand CP-2, Sandy Loam CP-2 and Clayey CP-2. The potential plant community for these ecological sites include; sand bluestem, little bluestem, sand dropseed, plains bristlegrass, sand paspalum, black grama, three awn and blue grama. Shrub species which occur are shinnery oak, sand sagebrush, and some mesquite. There have been vegetative monitoring studies done on this allotment from 1981 through 1995. Data at that time placed the public lands in a late ecological rating.

The RMP/EIS established resource objectives for the various plant community types. Refer to the attached Data Summary Tables (Attachment #1) which depict the allotment community average as it relates to the Desired Plant Community objectives for the Shinnery Oak Dune community as well as the Grassland and Drainages, Draws and Canyons Communities. The percentages of grasses, forbs, and shrubs actually found at a particular location will vary with recent weather conditions, past resource uses and the potential of the site.

The current vegetative resources on this allotment appear to be adequate to support

multiple use objectives and the rangeland trend is improving. The data used for this assessment is available at the Roswell Field Office.

### 3. Special Habitat Feature:

Presler Lake is a alkaline playa located in the southwest corner of the ranch. It is approximately 60 acres in size surrounded by public land. It is large in size with a broad beach and is bordered by sand dunes stabilized by bottomland vegetation. Surrounding the lake basin is a mesquite/alkali sacaton community common to this region. At the mouth of two larger drainages which empty into the playa are stands of shrub salt cedar, with scattered stands of four-wing saltbush. Although most alkali playas in this region are ephemeral, due to the large watershed area (13,430 acres) surrounding this playa, standing water is common during wet periods.

Playas are especially important to waterfowl, shorebirds and a variety of other migratory birds in this region because they provide wetlands in a area that is semi-arid and devoid of permanent water. Playas provide food, water and cover for resident wildlife throughout the year and during migration and winter for migratory species. Even when dry, playas provide plant diversity to the local area, which is important to upland wildlife.

### 4. Wildlife:

.Raptors that are frequently associated with the vegetation types on this allotment are the red-tailed hawk, swainson's hawk, ferruginous hawk, roughlegged hawk, common nighthawk, and the american kestrel.

Game bird species in this areas include the lesser prairie chicken, scaled and bob white quail, and the mourning dove.

Other bird species that are usually observed are the turkey vulture, roadrunner, chihuahuan raven, great-homed owl, burrowing owl, northern flicker, loggerhead shrike, western meadowlark, western kingbird, pyrrhuloxia, homed lark, and other passerine birds.

At least 33 species of mammals occur on or utilize this allotment. The diversity of small mammals provide for an excellent prey base for carnivores such as the coyote, gray fox, bobcat, raccoon, badger, hooded skunk and striped skunk.

Mammals that provide a prey base include the black-tailed jack rabbit, desert cottontail, spotted ground squirrel, pocket mice, deer mouse, kangaroo rats, northern grasshopper mouse, harvest mice, and the white throated woodrat.

Two big game species that occur the allotment are pronghorn antelope and mule deer.



Reptiles and amphibians that inhabit the area are the dune sagebrush lizard, southern prairie lizard, lesser earless lizard, side-blotched lizard, longnose leopard lizard, sixlined racerunner, tree lizard, skinks, western diamond back, western rattlesnake, coachwhip, spadefoot toads, western box turtle, and the yellow mud turtle.

## 5. Threatened/Endangered Species

Federal threatened, endangered and candidate species as well as state-listed threatened or endangered species potentially occurring within the proposed project area will be analyzed in this document.

There are no known Federal threatened and endangered species or critical habitat within the allotment.

However, there are several Federal Candidate and State listed species that may occupy or utilize the area. These include the swift fox, mountain plover, lesser prairie chicken, sand dune lizard and the black-tailed prairie dog. For a detailed description of the range, habitats, and potential threats to the swift fox and the mountain plover, refer to the Biological Opinion (AP11-38) in the RMP.

Special Status Species Known to Occur on this Allotment:

### Sand Dune Lizard

The State Threatened sand dune lizard only occurs in the southeastern corner of New Mexico and the western region of Texas. Within that range its habitat is restricted to active sand dunes and their peripheries (Degenhardt and Jones 1972). Shinnery oak is the dominate plant species that surrounds the top edge of the active sand dune, with a small composition of grasses inside the blowout area.

During 1991 a study was begun to examine the effects of the removal of shinnery oak on lizard habitat. Through five years of research it was demonstrated that there were 70%-94% fewer lizards in treated pastures as compared to non-treated pastures. As a result, the use of herbicides within suitable sand dune lizard habitat (blowouts) will be avoided.

There are scattered shinnery oak dunes that may provide sand dune lizard habitat, primarily in the southern half of the allotment..

### Lesser Prairie Chicken

Several years ago a petition was filed with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to list the prairie chicken as threatened. On June 1, 1998 the FWS announced a finding for the petition. After review of all available scientific and commercial information, the Service finds that listing this species is warranted but precluded by

other higher priority actions to amend the Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. The lesser prairie chicken is added to the Service's candidate species list.

In southeastern New Mexico, lesser prairie chickens exist in the shrub-dominated High Plains Bluestem Subtype by using mixed stands of tall grass and shinnery oak.

Lesser prairie chickens rely upon a variety of habitat types within the shinnery oak tall grass community. Seasonal habitat requirements vary from season to season and are often overlapping. This specific allotment contains nesting habitat, booming areas (leks), brood habitat and foraging habitat.

As with most wildlife species, especially upland game birds, precipitation plays a large role in population fluctuations and habitat conditions. Precipitation patterns have fluctuated drastically for the last twenty years. During the middle eighties precipitation was above normal and chicken populations were high. Except for two years, precipitation has been well below normal during the 1990's.

#### Population Monitoring Data

The Roswell Field Office has actively monitored prairie chicken booming grounds, population trends and habitat since the early seventies. Historically in New Mexico, the LPC occupied most of the eastern plains. However, numbers and occupied range of the species are much reduced since pre-settlement times; apparently in response to prolonged heavy grazing and brush control in combination with the great droughts of the 1930's and 1950's. It has been reported that currently the LPC occupies approximately one half their original range in New Mexico.

Since the early 1970's LPC populations have fluctuated up and down with the highest period occurring during the middle 1980's. This allotment has 18 leks that have been surveyed since the early 70's. They are all located in the southeast quadrant of the allotment. The attached Lek survey results (Attachment #2) of the Leks found on this allotment (See enclosed Allotment map with Lek sites) are indicative of the entire Roswell prairie chicken area. The chicken population experienced a dramatic decline starting in the early 90's. This allotment has been lightly grazed for the past ten years and provides all of the essential habitat requirements for the prairie chicken.

#### 6. Livestock Management:

This allotment recently transferred to a new owner. Before the new owner, this allotment was lightly stocked and grazed for at least ten years. It was run as a yearling and cow/calf operation, but most of the utilization occurred around the water facilities which left much of the pasture unused. The allotment consists of fifteen pastures. The allotment is watered by pipeline systems supplied by wells and by dirt tanks

## 7. Visual Resources:

The allotment is located in a Class IV Visual Management Area. The Class IV rating means that contrasts may attract attention and be a dominant feature in the landscape in terms of scale. However, the changes should repeat the basic elements of the landscape.

## 8. Air Quality:

The allotment is in a Class II area for the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of air quality as defined in the federal Clean Air Act, which allows a moderate amount of air quality degradation. Air quality is generally good, Winds are typically southeasterly during the summer, and becoming southwesterly in the winter and early spring. Winds average 10 miles per hour in the fall and 16 miles per hour in the spring, with peak velocities reaching 50 miles per hour. These conditions rapidly disperse air pollutants in the region.

## 9. Recreation:

Recreation opportunities are focused around hunting. Mule deer, antelope, and game birds, such as quail and dove are taken during hunting seasons. Legal and physical access to public lands located on this allotment are through state lands, county maintained roads and roads existing on public lands. Off Highway Vehicle designation for public lands within this allotment are classified as "Limited" to existing roads and trails.

## 10. Caves and Karst:

A complete significant cave or karst inventory has not been completed for the public lands located in this grazing allotment. Presently, no known significant caves or karst features have been identified within this allotment. If at a later date, a significant cave or karst feature is located on public lands within this allotment, that cave or feature may be fenced to exclude livestock grazing and Off Highway Vehicle Use. A separate Environmental analysis would be prepared to construct this enclosure fence.

# **IV. Environmental Impacts**

## **A. Impacts of the Proposed Action**

### 1. Soils:

The permitted use as described in the proposed action has not had any adverse impact to the current soil conditions. Some soil loss would continue to occur due to the windy conditions that prevail in this region during parts of the year. If vegetative cover remains stable soil loss may be minimized.

Changes in vegetative ground cover is often linked to the amount and timing of precipitation events. This assessment is based on the assumption that the area will receive at least the long term average in precipitation both in timing and amount.

## 2. Vegetation:

The continuance of the permitted use at the current use levels authorized by the expiring permit is not anticipated to have any adverse impact to the current vegetative conditions. The vegetation will continue to be grazed and trampled by domestic livestock as well as other herbivores such as well rabbits, rodents and insects. Under the proposed action , it is not anticipated that a significant change in the vegetative composition or amount available for use will occur. The continuance of the present livestock management practices is not anticipated to alter the vegetative composition. Ecological condition and trend is expected to remain stable or improve over the long term at this permitted number.

## 3. Special Habitat Feature:

The present livestock management practices have not adversely impacted Presler Lake.

## 4. Wildlife:

Domestic livestock will continue to utilize vegetative resources needed by a variety of wildlife species for life history functions within this allotment. The magnitude of livestock grazing impacts on wildlife is dependent upon the species of wildlife being considered, and its habitat needs. In general, livestock stocking rate adjustments have been made in the past to minimize the direct competition for those vegetative resources needed by a variety of wildlife species. Cover habitat for wildlife will remain the same as the existing situation. Maintenance and operation of existing waterings will continue to provide dependable water sources for wildlife, as well as livestock.

## 5. Threatened/Endangered Species:

Under the proposed action there would be no affect to Federal threatened and endangered species since there are no known T/E occurrences within this allotment.

### Special Status Species Known to Occur on the Allotment:

Under the proposed action, there would be minimal impacts to the sand dune lizard due to the dispersal of livestock. Areas where there is a concentration of livestock (waterings and fence corners) the habitat may be of lower quality, but these areas are small in nature. Range improvements (pipelines) may enhance lizard habitat by creating open dunal areas that are usually bordered by shinnery oak.

Under the proposed action impacts to prairie chicken habitat are likely to continue, especially during drought conditions. The southern pastures provide excellent nesting habitat with shinnery oak motts interspersed, but without a rest rotation system and strict monitoring these areas may become negatively impacted.

#### 6 Livestock Management:

Under the proposed action there would be no impacts to the current livestock management. The allotment would continue to be grazed in the same manner as it is currently.

#### 7. Visual Resources:

The continued grazing of livestock would not affect the form or color of the landscape, or the primary aspect of the vegetation within the allotment.

#### 8. Air Quality:

The impacts to air quality would not change from the current situation. A minor amount of air quality degradation would continue.

#### 9. Recreation:

Grazing would have little or no affect on the recreational opportunities. Legal access to this parcel of public land would still remain available.

#### 10. Significant Caves/Karst

No known significant caves or karst features are known to exist on the public lands located within this allotment. Grazing would not affect the karst resources.

### **B. Impacts from the Change Livestock Management Alternative (Preferred Alternative)**

#### 1. Soils:

There should be minor changes in the soil condition resulting from initiation of the Preferred alternative. There should be improvements in the soil holding capabilities due to pasture rest and rotation. Vegetative cover should remain stable and improve resulting in minimizing soil loss.

#### 2. Vegetation:

It is expected that the number of plant species found within the allotment will remain the same, however, there may be small changes in the percentages of these

species. There should be an increase in the amount of standing vegetation in the shinnery oak and other community types from the Preferred Alternative. Standing grass height on the bluestem species should improve. Overall, positive impacts would result to vegetation by providing additional rest during the growing season through pasture rotation and the growing season rest in two of the shinnery oak pastures each year.

### 3. Special Habitat Feature:

Under the Preferred Alternative, due to the pasture rest and rotation, there would be some improvement to the watershed, soils and vegetation, which would have a beneficial impact to the playa.

### 4. Wildlife:

Under the Preferred Alternative, the wildlife impacts should be the same as under the Proposed Action, with improved habitat conditions due to the pasture rotation and rest.

### 5. Threatened/Endangered Species:

Under the Preferred Alternative, there would be no affect to Federal threatened and endangered species since there are no known T/E occurrences within this allotment.

### Special Status Species Known to Occur on this Allotment:

There should be no impacts to the dune lizard under this alternative. There would be positive impacts to the prairie chicken in the nine shinnery oak pastures due to the increased grass cover for nesting. These impacts will result from the deferred grazing use during the fall/winter months and the deferment of grazing during July, August and September in two of the shinnery oak pastures each year. There should be no impacts to the eighteen Lek sites on this allotment and with resumption of normal rainfall, there would likely be an increase in the prairie chickens on this allotment.

### 6. Livestock Management:

Under this alternative there will be major changes in the grazing management on this allotment. The allotment will continue to be run as a cow/calf operation. The herd will spend the winter in the northern half of the allotment, which is the grasslands, then move through the Weaning and Presler pastures, which are off-shinnery pastures. The herd will then be separated into three separate herds and rotated through the southern half of the allotment through the late spring, summer and fall. Two of the southern shinnery oak pastures will be rested for the July, August, September

growing season each year.

This alternative will require more involvement by the permittee ensuring the livestock are moved at the appropriate seasons of the year and that the water facilities are operational and functional for livestock use when the livestock are in the pastures.

#### 7. Visual Resources:

There would be no change in the visual resources.

#### 8. Air Quality:

There would probably be less dust and blowing sand under this alternative, but would be negligible when considering the area as a whole.

#### 9. Recreation:

There would be no change to Recreation activity, primarily hunting from implementing this alternative.

#### 10. Significant Cave/Karsts:

Impacts would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

### **C. Impacts of the No Livestock Grazing Alternative.**

The No Livestock Grazing Alternative has been previously analyzed at the National level in the Rangeland Reform '94 EIS and in the Roswell RMP/EIS. An in depth analysis of this alternative will not be made in this document. General impacts under this alternative would include no new rangeland improvement and the removal of existing rangeland improvements unless a determination was made that they were beneficial to other uses. Since no grazing authorizations on public lands would be permitted, livestock operators grazing lands adjoining Federal lands would be responsible for preventing the unauthorized use of these Federal lands. The BLM would not fence these lands. Rangeland administrative emphasis would shift to issuing crossing permits to or from nonfederal land inholdings and resolving unauthorized use.

### **V. Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impacts of the grazing and no grazing alternatives were considered in Chapter 4 of Rangeland Reform '94 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and in Chapter 4 of the Roswell Resource Area Proposed RMP/EIS. The no livestock

grazing alternative was not selected in either document.

On the allotment specific level, there will be no cumulatively significant impacts from the proposed action /alternatives or from the no grazing alternative.

## **VI. Residual Impacts**

The area has been grazed by livestock since the early part of the 1900's if not longer. Recent vegetative monitoring studies have shown that grazing , at the current permitted numbers of animals, is sustainable. If the mitigation measures are enacted, then there would be no residual impacts to the proposed action

## **VII. Mitigating Measures And/Or Permit/Lease Conditions**

Vegetation monitoring studies will continue to be conducted and the permitted numbers of livestock will be adjusted if necessary. If new information surfaces that livestock grazing is negatively impacting other resources, action will be taken to mitigate the impacts.

## **VIII. Fundamentals of Rangeland Health**

The fundamentals of rangeland health are basic components of healthy rangelands and guiding principles for the development of standards and guidelines for livestock grazing. The fundamentals are identified in 43 CFR §§4180.1 and pertain to watershed function, ecological processes, water quality and habitat for threatened and endangered (T&E) species or other special status species. Based on the best available data and professional judgement, this EA addresses the fundamentals of Rangeland Health.

## **Field Office Staff Involvement/Review**

John Spain - Rangeland Management Specialist  
Rand French - Wildlife Management Biologist  
Jerry Ballard - Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Jim Schroeder - Watershed Specialist  
Pat Flannery - Archeologist



FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/RATIONALE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT: I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined the **proposed action** will not have significant impacts on the human environment and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Rationale for Recommendations: The proposed action would not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation. The **proposed action** will be in compliance with the Roswell Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (October, 1997).

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T. R. Kreager,  
Assistant Field Office Manager - Resources

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Date